

Listing of Claim Amendments

1-5. (Cancelled)

6. (New) A method of delivering bone graft material to a bone defect area in a patient's body through a minimally invasive portal, comprising:

providing an instrument assembly for delivering the bone graft material to the bone defect area, said instrument assembly comprising:

a bone graft needle for delivery of bone graft material to the bone defect area, said needle comprising an elongate bendable tubular delivery member having an open distal end for positioning at the bone defect area via the minimally invasive portal providing access to the bone defect area from externally of the patient's body and having an open proximal end for being supplied with bone graft material from externally of the patient's body, said open distal end being aligned with a central longitudinal axis of said delivery member for discharge of the bone graft material therefrom towards the bone defect area; and

an elongate flexible penetrating member for receipt within said bone graft needle,

inserting said elongate flexible penetrating member into said bone graft needle until a distal end of said elongate flexible penetrating member extends from said open distal end of said bone graft needle,

bending said instrument assembly intraoperatively while said elongate flexible penetrating member is inserted in said bone graft needle to thereby provide said bone graft needle with a selected bent configuration, said selected bent configuration configured for accessing the bone defect area,

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inserting said instrument assembly having said selected bent configuration through the minimally invasive portal until said distal end of said bone graft needle operatively reaches the bone defect area, while maintaining said proximal end of said bone graft needle external of the patient's body,

removing said elongate flexible penetrating member from said bone graft needle while retaining said distal end of said bone graft needle at said bone defect area, said elongate flexible penetrating member being sufficiently flexible to allow said elongate flexible penetrating member to be removed from said bone graft needle without substantially altering said selected bent configuration of said bone graft needle, and

delivering a bone graft material in paste form to the bone defect area via injection of said bone graft material through said bone graft needle, said bone graft material comprising calcium sulfate.

7. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein both said bone graft needle and said elongate flexible penetrating member are constructed so as to be easily bendable with minimal crimping so as not to impede fluid flow through said bone graft needle, yet not easily break.

8. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein said bone graft needle and said penetrating member are configured to allow bending the instrument assembly into any number of curved shapes that allow the bone graft needle to more easily access hard to reach bone defect areas of the patient's body.

9. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein said tubular delivery member is formed of thin-walled stainless steel of about 6 to about 11 gauge.

10. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein said elongate flexible penetrating member is formed of polyether-ether-ketone and has a stainless steel tip.

11. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein said polyether-ether-ketone is solid.

12. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein said polyether-ether-ketone is hollow.

13. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein said instrument assembly is bent to said selected bent configuration by matching said instrument assembly to a template.

14. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein said instrument assembly is bent to said selected bent configuration using a cannula bender, said cannula bender configured for use in bending said bone graft needle without kinking said bone graft needle.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein said cannula bender is configured for use in bending said bone graft needle along various radii of curvature.

16. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein said cannula bender is configured for use in bending said bone graft needle in more than one plane.

17. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein said bone graft material includes demineralized bone matrix.